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ABSTRACT

The advisory council is important in developing a career education system in the elementary and secondary schools of our communities. The advisory council as a school community can assist by recruiting the totality of the community's resources. The council offers a mechanism designed to wire an educational system into the work world, linking education exit and work entry requirements. Members of the council bring their expertise, insight, experience, knowledge, commitment, and occupational programs. They help create a responsible society which responds to follow citizens' needs, in this case, the youth of such communities as San Francisco, Madison, Akron, and Syracuse. Advisory councils are engaged in important career education work: staff and curriculum development, career guidance, job placement, work experience/career exploration, and evaluation. It is challenging work which focuses on shaping human resources to fulfill their dual roles as citizens of the community and citizens of the work community. (CSS)

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COMMUNITY BASED CAREER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCILS: A MECHANISM FOR LOCAL COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

by

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I. AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCILS

Career education has become a major force in providing youth with in school experiences that relate to work and society as a whole. It is an integral part of an educational delivery system that seeks to prepare every student who leaves the school system with at least entry-level job skills or with the basic educational attainment to permit entry into further education programs.

It has always been difficult for students to make the transition from the classroom to the workplace. Students need a realistic perception of the world of work, and good quality, up-to-date educational programs to facilitate their entrance into that world. The ultimate success of a school depends upon its ability to provide these opportunities. Furthermore, the availability of such learning experiences can be realized by recognizing that work and education are so related that neither can exist in isolation from the other.

From the beginning, career education has been viewed as an effort that cannot succeed in a community with the involvement of educators alone. Rather, it is clear that a collaborative effort is required involving the:

- ☐ educational system
- ☐ business/labor/government/professional community
- ☐ home/family structure

More specifically, bringing the workplace and education into alignment is necessary to implement an effective school-to-work transition. A Community Based Career Education Advisory Council is a realistic mechanism designed to wire an educational system into the world of work, thereby providing schools with the critical link between education exit and work entry requirements. The effort at linking and aligning the schools and the workplace at the community level is a priority in career education due to the significant changes impacting on the employment situation for youth. Changes in technology, job structure, income, population, and manpower require major adjustments in educational programs focusing on the school-to-work transition.

A Community Based Career Education Advisory Council serves as a district-wide advisory group of decision-makers from business, government, labor, education, and the professions. In helping a school system develop a comprehensive career education delivery system geared to the realities of the workplace an Advisory Council has the following important functions:

- ☐ It brings together all the educational resources within a community.
- ☐ It serves as a system-wide umbrella for the collaborative process.
- ☐ It mobilizes the key resources of a community, develops plans for their effective allocation, and provides a greater opportunity to achieve program objectives.
- ☐ It offers an educational system the opportunity to strengthen the instructional effort at all levels of education through an applied approach to concepts and principles which relate classroom teaching to the world of work and career fields, and offers the opportunity to develop and maintain curricula relevant to current and anticipated employment needs.

The collaborative process is the key to an effective Community Based Career Education Advisory Council. It is obvious that many of the existing community efforts in career education have been started and continue to operate independently from all others. While each has been successful in many ways, none has been as successful as it could be if it had joined forces with all others. Career education encourages the broader community and education to coordinate their efforts in focusing on facilitating an individual's transition from education to work, and determining how the individual can best be served by all of the resources existing in the community.

The collaborative process in career education emphasizes direct participation of decision-makers from the private and public sectors of the community, working with the schools in such areas as staff and curriculum development, career guidance, school-based job placement, and work experience/career exploration.

A process of collaboration in career education focuses on thorough planning, realistic objectives, key result areas, incremental improvement, and measurement. There must be a strong, long-term commitment to the collaborative process and the mission of a Community Based Career Education Advisory Council.

II. FORMING A COMMUNITY BASED CAREER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Past efforts to organize Councils demonstrate two characteristics which are required at the beginning:

1. At least one interested, enthusiastic person, either from education or industry, i.e., business, labor, government, and the professions must take the initiative. In one community this key person may be a corporate executive; in another, the spark for action may be struck by a school administrator who has established contact with key industry leaders through community organizations.
2. Leadership and planning must come from both industry and education.

The next step is to identify decision-makers who will serve on a Board of Directors or Executive Committee of the Career Education Advisory Council. These decision-makers should include representatives of the major employers, organized labor, government, professions, and parent groups.

A Community Career Education Advisory Council is not responsible for operating programs. Rather, it seeks ways of stimulating changes in the total school program through the integration of the career education concept at all levels in education.

III. CAREER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MODELS

There are a number of Career Education Advisory Councils in the nation which reflect effective organization and delivery of services to school districts. The community based councils in San Francisco, California; Madison, Wisconsin; Akron, Ohio; and Syracuse, New York demonstrate how utilization of local volunteer resources can be maximized in the key areas of staff/curriculum development, career guidance, special projects in job placement, and work experience/career exploration activities.While the names of these Advisory Councils vary, each has a similar pattern of organization, program development, and operation.

The school staff coordinator for career education meets with the Advisory Council President and Committee Chairpersons to formulate career education plans for the school year. A systems approach is used in assessing the needs of the school system, and a prioritized list of objectives is developed for each major area such as staff development, career guidance and job placement followed by an action plan and provision for evaluation.

The Career Education Coordinator works with the Advisory Council in identifying the target audiences of the various projects, the resources required to include community volunteer personnel, project schedules, and progress reports. An operational plan is approved by the School District for the fiscal year based on the collaborative planning process with the Council. The Advisory Council assumes responsibility for catalyzing the volunteer community support for the career education intiatives.

The Career Education Advisory Council, working closely with the School District, becomes committed to a written plan for the incremental development of a comprehensive career education delivery system. The following discussion focuses on the major areas of this collaborative process at work in a community setting.

IV. CAREER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

To illustrate the variety of Career Education Advisory Council activities, six broad program categories are discussed: (1) Staff Development; (2) Career Education Oriented Curriculum; (3) Career Guidance; (4) School Based Job Placement Services; (5) Work Experience/Career Exploration for Students; and (6) A Comprehensive Evaluation System.

Staff Development

The primary effort in the long term implementation of career education is in intensive and comprehensive in-service training linking faculty, administrators, guidance counselors, and librarians/media specialists in a team effort representing all levels, kindergarten through grade 12. Because career education brings with it a new curriculum design, all who are involved must understand the concept and philosophy that serves as its base. Career education will survive or fail depending on the nature and scope of the in-service training program that the school system provides to facilitate evolutionary change in the educational system.

The Advisory Council plays a major role in the development of in-service training providing instructional staff, facilities, and materials. Representatives from business, labor, government and the professions participate in workshop sessions devoted to an analysis of career clusters, sex stereotyping in occupations, employability skills, occupational information and utilization of community resources.

The school-home linkage in career education is an important part of a staff development program. Parental involvement in staff development programs adds an important dimension to the comprehensive community based career education system.

Another dimension of an Advisory Council's involvement in career education staff development, is the sponsorship of an internship in industry project. This activity, usually conducted during the

summer,offers school staff an intensive work and learn on-site experience, highlighting an organization's human resources management policies and practices, training programs, career possibilities, administrative and financial structure, and the processes and operational methods it uses.

Staff development for elementary and secondary school staff is the priority area for a Career Education Advisory Council and constitutes the base for further incremental steps in developing a district-wide comprehensive career education system.

The end result of the staff development program is career education teams composed of school staff members prepared to implement career education within a school building in an on-going collaborative effort with the business/labor/government/professional community and parents.

Career Education Oriented Curriculum

A Community Based Career Education Advisory Council provides information needed for making curriculum relevant and unified. To achieve a meaningful curriculum, a school must integrate career education concepts into the general curriculum at each grade level.

Through a massive infusion of illustrations from the world of work utilizing a developmental career ladder in the three phases of a comprehensive career education curriculum—career awareness for grades K-6, career exploration for grades 7-9, and career preparation for grades 10-12—students are offered courses related to their real life concerns. The Council and other community resources assist the school in transmitting accurate knowledge to students about "the environment"—the real world where the action will take place. Students integrate career education concepts with the real world through the collaborative effort of school staff and an Advisory Council.

A Career Education Advisory Council assumes the responsibility of assessing the impact of changes in the workplace, e.g., technological, job structure, and manpower, on the curriculum, and advises how the curriculum can best be modified to take into account these changes. This requires an effective Career Education Advisory Council to be at the cutting edge of curriculum reform and innovation.

A Comprehensive career education system is constructed around the career-cluster concept, one which lends itself to utilizing community volunteers. A Career Education Advisory Council can serve as the instrumentality through which the school can recruit community resource persons and organize them into a task force representing the U.S. Office of Education's 15 career clusters. School districts develop directories of volunteer career consultants representing the major career clusters to assist them in implementing career education in the total school program.

One cannot expect the commitment of a school system to an education/work program without a written statement of career education outcomes—that is, the competencies required by students to assume a productive role in the marketplace. The Advisory Council, working with school staff members, particularly those who serve as school building career education coordinators or personnel who have completed in-service training in career education, develops goals for a comprehensive career education system. Members of the Advisory Council will require orientation to the concepts of career education relative to the awareness, exploration and preparation phases.

The Career Education Coordinator assumes the responsibility for this orientation and coordination of the development of a statement of career education goals for the school system. Thus, a Council plays a vital role in assisting schools to develop relevant curricula at all levels for various disciplines by evaluating course offerings, pointing out obsolete course material, and suggesting new courses, particularly in the non-mandated curriculum, that can be tailored to career opportunities. An Advisory Council can also assist in the development of manpower/occupational skills surveys which provide data on current and emerging job opportunities to schools who are better able to respond with appropriate curricula.

Career Guidance

Career guidance is an integral part of the transition from the world of education to the world of work. Counselors require information about occupational opportunities, employment policies, and conditions in various career fields. A Council can assist in the development of an

occupational information system, a formidable component of the career guidance function in a school building. A Council Committee, working with school staff and private and public organizations, can design an occupational information delivery system that strengthens the career guidance services for students and provides other school personnel, such as teachers, administrators and librarians/media specialists with information that can be readily accessible and disseminated to students in a usable form.

Current occupational data is needed by students for making rational career choices. This information is utilized by students in selecting appropriate courses for preparation of a particular occupation.

Through a school system and Advisory Council cosponsored comprehensive staff development program in career education, guidance personnel are prepared to function in certain assigned roles as part of a building career education team. The guidance function becomes part of the support system of the focal point of learning–the classroom. Again, the role of in-service training in career education becomes a priority for counselors who assist in the coordination and implementation of career education, and who need to work on a regular basis with teachers in career education.

In developing a comprehensive career education system, the establishment of a Career Information or Career Resource Center is a long term investment in broadening the base of support for student involvement in career education in a school building. The Center, viewed as an extension of career guidance, provides the Advisory Council with multiple opportunities to help school personnel develop a building mechanism that provides direct services to high school students in such areas as self assessment, occupational planning, job entry and placement, and post-secondary education opportunities at any time during the day. As a school building activity, a Career Information/Resource Center is the focal point where students, counselors, teachers, librarians/media specialists, administrators and parents have immediate access to all career resources available in the school.

The Advisory Council can assist a school in recruiting community resource people representing the (15) career clusters to meet with students and staff to exchange information. Community volunteer career consultants can be scheduled to assist students in developing plans for their future in terms of self assessment and occupational requirements and trends. Career related audio-visual materials, posters,

bulletin board displays, and books and magazines are made available through the Advisory Council for use in a variety of student centered activities and instructional materials.

The Career Information/Resource Center serves as the on-going school building catalyst for career education resources. If the Career Education Advisory Council and parents participate in the planning and implementation of the Center, their interest can provide an impetus for the involvement of other community members. When parents and Council members become directly involved in programs such as the Center, they are able to have first hand experience with the educational process. Through these experiences, new support for education can grow.

School Based Job Placement Services

Another major dimension of facilitating the transition from education to work is the development of a school based job placement services function. The Career Education Advisory Council, Career Education Coordinator, and other school personnel provide the planning effort for a placement function relative to organizational structure, relationships with various school departments, and services.

School based job placement is an integral part of a comprehensive career education system in a school district. Graduates and other school leavers expecting to enter the labor market are entitled to assistance in planning for and being placed in jobs by a school system, just as graduates going on to higher education traditionally have been assisted in planning for and being placed in post secondary institutions. Now that career education is becoming a major facet of public education, job counseling, career planning, and placement services must be provided to those students not immediately going on to higher education, in order to make their schooling purposeful and relevant.

Three general objectives of a job placement function integrated into a career education system are:

1. Placement and follow up services for all youth commensurate with their interests, aptitude and ability.
2. Student development or preparation activities directed to all youth exiting school which will enable them to obtain and retain

employment referred to as employability skills.

3. Development of lines of communication with industry, that is, business, labor, government, and the professions which will facilitate the successful entry of youth into the labor market.

It is in the area of student development—the most complex and important segment of placement— that an Advisory Council can maximize its support. Student development relates to the regular school curricula and includes special programs and activities to prepare students for entry into employment. The Council assists in the implementation of this job placement function by recruiting personnel representatives in industry to conduct on-site programs in classrooms and Career Information/Resource Centers on:

- ☐ Making a personal inventory of interests, abilities, skills, and experience—or selling oneself to an employer.
- ☐ Identifying sources of job opportunities and training programs through the school, want ads, employment agencies, and personal contacts.
- ☐ Preparing a resume and completing application forms.
- ☐ Being effective in a job interview—learning about an employer prior to applying for a job and taking pre-employment tests.
- ☐ Identifying factors to be considered before accepting a job—that is, what an individual is looking for in the job he or she chooses.

Survival skills are also an integral part of this job placement activity—skills related to job behavior, interpersonal relations, decision making, and self-awareness, for example. Industry representatives also provide students with information on the first days of a job, how to move ahead on the job, and the role of unions.

Other factors in employment, such as social security, retirement benefits, taxes, and using bank services, are included under student development. The Advisory Council assists a school system in forming a Job Placement Advisory Committee of business/labor/government/professional/education/parent representatives to work specifically in the area of program development and school-community collaborative projects and activities.

A school-based job placement service program requires a team effort by school staff members. A number of school systems have a job placement coordinator at the district level who is responsible for developing

placement services as an integral component of a comprehensive community based career education program. In any event, career education teams at all levels, school building career education coordinators, Career Information/Resource Centers, a Career Education Advisory Council, and a Job Placement Advisory Committee represent the consortium of effort required to implement a school based job placement function for youth.

This type of delivery system is flexible enough not only to meet the needs of particular groups of students, but also to meet those of each individual as well.

Work Experience/Career Exploration for Students

There are severe limits to what students can learn about work out of publications. Accordingly, career education seeks to make work experience—paid or unpaid—a general methodology available to all students beginning at the secondary school level and continuing through the college and university system. To the greatest extent possible, such work experience should be aimed primarily at career exploration as part of the career decision-making process.

To embark on a work experience or career exploration program of signficant scale, requires the collaboration of education and the broader community. The Career Education Advisory Council has the expertise and resources to assist educators in planning and operating work experience type programs designed to facilitate decision-making and the acquisition of employability skills by a student such as:

- ☐ Paid on-the-job experience in cooperative education programs.
- ☐ Observational experiences including shadowing experiences.
- ☐ Career exploration experiences including both unpaid work experience and internships.
- ☐ Unpaid work experience related to the productive use of leisure time.

The Career Advisory Council can be effective in helping school personnel identify cooperating sites through its linkage to such organizations as the local Chamber of Commerce, metro office of the National Alliance of Businessmen, Government agencies, and business and professional groups. A Council plays an important role in developing the

scope, objectives, and operational components of a work experience program.

The collaborative efforts of the Advisory Council, the schools, and other community organizations in providing opportunities for student work experience and career exploration as an integral part of a comprehensive career education system, offer students valuable experience in:

- ☐ Becoming oriented to an adult work situation since the individual has the opportunity to actually confront the work norms encountered by adults.
- ☐ Seeing how his or her attributes relate to the total work situation. Frequently, traditional classroom study fragments the work related skills into small increments for purposes of study.

In on-site work experience and career exploration programs, all of these elements come together naturally in an environment in which the student participates, and continually inventories his or her interests, values and skills.

The Advisory Council's direct participation in the planning and operation of these on-site student activities contributes to the development of a community based delivery system in career education.

A Comprehensive Evaluation System

The collaborative process in career education must take into account the development of a comprehensive evaluation system. Inherent in the purpose of evaluation is accountability—and fundamental to accountability is the concept of community involvement. A Career Education Advisory Council offers the school system the needed component of community involvement in assisting educators in the organization, implementation, and continuation of career education programs.

Evaluation should be considered as part of the management of educational systems, and in particular, part of the process of management of career education, with the underlying purpose of improving program performance. Educators involved in career education must constantly seek feedback on the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of what they are doing. Monitoring of this sort lends information to the decision-makers, no matter on what level those decisions are made.

Members of the Council, having a background in management information systems and managing by objectives or for results, can be utilized, for example, in planning the evaluation of career education in terms of program definition — that is, specifying what is to be evaluated, designing the evaluation plan, implementing the plan, and reporting the findings.

A collaborative effort in developing a comprehensive evaluation system involving the Advisory Council and educators will provide the needed information required to answer such questions as:

- Was the career education program worthwhile?
- How is the program progressing?
- Is everyone meeting the expectations of the programs?
- Is the particular program the one that is really needed or would another do a better job?
- Did the program accomplish what the advocates of the program said it was going to accomplish?

An Advisory Council offers a needed service to schools in accountability and assessment in career education, a necessary component to the success of a comprehensive career education system.

V. Summary

In order to move career education from a concept to a reality, it must be viewed as a new system of public education. To become a system, it will be necessary to make basic changes in the organizational and administrative structure of the local education agencies committed to career education, particularly in those areas affecting community involvement and working relationships. The Advisory Council represents an important step in bringing about these changes.

There is no way to overstress the importance of an Advisory Council in the development of a career education system in the elementary and secondary schools of our communities. An Advisory Council is the community in the school—and the instrumentality through which the school can recruit the totality of the community's resources.

Members of Career Education Advisory Councils are social mechanics. They devote their efforts to building programs that help society. They bring to a Council their expertise, insight, experience, knowledge, commitment, and occupational programs.

Career Education Advisory Councils contribute substantially toward the strengthening of a responsible society—one that is not the creation of an omnipotent national or state government. A responsible society has its roots in the local community. A responsible society is created when citizens respond to the needs of their fellow citizens—in this instance the youth of such communities as San Francisco, Madison, Akron, and Syracuse. By responding to these needs, the Career Education Advisory Council members build this responsibility.

Advisory Councils are engaged in important work in career education—staff and curriculum development, career guidance, job placement, work experience/career exploration and evaluation. It is work focusing on the shaping of human resources to fulfill their dual roles both as citizens of the community and citizens of the work community. Herein lies a challenge and an opportunity.

For further information on Career Education Advisory Councils and community based career education programs, write to:

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